

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES REPORT  
GREAT MEADOWS NWR COMPLEX  
January 1998

A. Highlights

B. Climatic Conditions

A severe ice storm, which hit Northern New England over the January 9 weekend, did moderate damage to trees lining the entry drive to John Hay National Wildlife Refuge. No Cost estimate for the damage has ~~not~~ been prepared to date. Fortunately the buildings survived with just a bare minimum of damage.

On January 16, a snow storm forced the closure of the office. Approximately 10 inches fell on the refuge.

C. Land Acquisition

1. Fee Title

- On January 13, Project Leader Oliveira and Refuge Operations Specialist Kimbrough met with the Rails to Trails Committee to discuss the Sudbury Annex and the possibility of using a portion of the lands for bike trails. Although the refuge would not support a bike trail system, discussions of potential acquisitions along the Assabet River corridor provided a potential for future Service acquisition. A report on the potential expansion project was prepared and submitted to Realty.
- On January 14, Project Leader Oliveira and Deputy Project Leader Kennedy toured the landfill sites on the former Fort Devens. Approximately 836 acres are scheduled to be transferred to the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge. Two sites in particular, Area of Concern (AOC) 11 and AOC 41, are adjacent to the Nashua River and are scheduled to be left in place with only surficial cleanup planned.
- On January 15, a Level II Contaminant Survey was performed at the O'Rourke property in Carlisle. This 126 acre parcel is scheduled for acquisition from the Town of Carlisle once funding becomes available.
- On January 15, Project Leader Oliveira provided a tour of the O'Rourke property and the Sudbury Annex to Suzanne Morse of Senator Edward Kennedy's Boston Office and Glen Shor and Kate Dempsey from Representative Marty Meehan's Washington and Lowell Offices.
- On January 19, Project Leader Oliveira met with landowner Steve Glover to inspect a

parcel of land which Mr. Glover wishes to sell to the refuge in Wayland, MA. The 10 acre parcel is located in an oxbow of the Sudbury River immediately South of the refuge boundary and borders Town of Wayland and Sudbury Valley Trustees lands.

- Senator Edward Kennedy sent a letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy requesting that the Navy remove the unexploded ordnance from Nomans Land Island prior to transferring the lands to the Service.
- The White House, as part of the \$700 million supplemental land acquisition funding proposal for 1998, recommended that Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge receive \$2 million for the acquisition of the O'Rourke tract in Carlisle. This came about as a result of the hard work by Senator Kennedy and Representative Meehan's offices. The proposal is now in the appropriations committees for review.
- Project Leader Oliveira was contacted by Justine Uritam of the Upper Charles River Conservation Trust regarding a landowner on the Charles River who has 35 acres of land with a new home (+/- 4,500 square feet) to donate. The possibility of a new national wildlife refuge was discussed utilizing the donation, additional lands bordering the Charles River and potentially some Corps of Engineer lands along the river.

## 2. Easements

## 3. Other

### D. Planning

#### 1. Master plan

#### 2. Management Plan

- On January 30, Deputy RM Kennedy attended a meeting of the Mashpee Management Committee at Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve on Cape Cod. Land acquisition, a work plan, and the MOU with the Service were discussed.
- The public comment period for the plan "Nesting Season Operating Procedures, Monitoring Protocols, and Competitor/Predator Management, 1998 - 2000" ended on Jan. 16. A total of 36 comment letters were received. In addition, refuge staff met with representatives from several local organizations that have opposed the Monomoy project in the past, on Jan. 7 to discuss their concerns with the draft plan. Public comments were formally documented and considered. The Service's responses were compiled into an administrative record. A proposed final version of the plan was forwarded to the Regional Office (along with the administrative record) for final approval on January 30.

### 3. Public Participation

- Project Leader Oliveira and Refuge Operations Specialist Ware attended a public hearing on Jan. 21 regarding installation of a rock wall revetment on property adjacent to Monomoy NWR. The proposal includes continuing the revetment approximately 30 feet onto refuge property, and will impact the refuge's beach stairs. Negotiations with the contractor over the cost and time-frame of replacing the refuge stairs are expected to be finalized prior to the next public hearing with the Chatham Conservation Commission regarding the project (sometime in February).

### 4. Compliance with Environmental Mandates

- Great Meadows NWR was previously classified as a Public Water Supply System which came with State water testing and fee requirements. A site is designated as a Public Water Supply based on the level of visitation. ROS Kimbrough approached DEP to discuss the level of visitation, which seemed far below the cutoff for being designated as a Public Water Supply System. A DEP representative visited the Refuge, and DRM Kennedy provided visitor statistics to justify the refuge's exemption from State water testing requirements. DEP ended up declassifying Great Meadows as a Public Water Supply System which means we are now under the authority of the local board of health and exempt from DEP's requirements.

### 5. Research and Investigations

- On January 29, a meeting was held between the Service and the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geologic Survey at Great Meadows NWR to discuss research needs at Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge.

## E. ADMINISTRATION

### 1. Personnel

- On January 18, Biological Science Student Trainee Wendy Lilly-Hansen entered on duty. Wendy is a graduate student the University of Massachusetts and will be training as a Refuge Manager Trainee.
- In preparation for the upcoming field season, Monomoy refuge staff put together vacancy announcements for 2 seasonal, temporary bio-tech's and 1 seasonal, temporary park ranger.

### 2. Youth Programs

### 3. Other Manpower Programs

### 4. Volunteers Program

- Volunteers donated 23 hours assisting with the Meadows Messenger this month.

#### 5. Funding

#### 6. Safety

- Monomoy refuge staff worked with the safety office and the regional solicitor in resolving a tort claim that resulted from a minor vehicle accident involving a refuge volunteer last summer.

#### 7. Technical Assistance

#### 8. Other Items

- Monomoy Refuge staff continued attempts to complete the \$20,000 transfer to the NOAA National Weather Service per inter-agency agreement #1448-50191-98-H-003. The main contact person in the NWS office, Marti Rierson, retired in December 1997, however, and NWS has been slow in designating a replacement.
- Maintenance Mechanic Sears received a STAR award and a framed State of Maine Duck Stamp Print in recognition of his efforts over the past year at the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge Complex.
- Deputy RM Kennedy facilitated meetings of the National Wildlife Refuge System Conference steering committee Denver and the Washington Office this month.

### F. Habitat Management

#### 1. General

#### 2. Wetlands

#### 3. Forests

- RFTA Devens staff agreed to remove logs which had been felled along the tank road at Oxbow NWR. The trees had been felled by refuge staff with the assistance of National Park Service staff last summer following a damaging late spring storm.

#### 4. Croplands

#### 5. Grasslands

#### 6. Other Habitats

#### 7. Grazing

8. Haying
9. Fire Management
10. Pest Control
11. Water Rights
12. Wilderness and Special Areas
13. WPA Easement Monitoring

#### G. Wildlife

1. Wildlife Diversity
2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species
  - Project Leader Oliveira discussed a Center for Coastal Studies proposal the the Massachusetts Environmental Trust for studying roseate tern staging areas which includes Monomoy NWR with Center Director Peter Borelli and principal investigator Peter Trull. The proposal was prepared without first discussing it with refuge staff. A March meeting is planned to discuss the proposal.
  - ROS Kimbrough conducted the annual midwinter bald eagle survey for the MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife on January 9, 1998. No eagles were seen on the Refuge but the statewide survey revealed a new record, 76 bald eagles and two golden eagles. People participating in the survey noted that eagles were returning to their nesting territories and engaging in courtship and nest repair.
3. Waterfowl
4. Marsh and Water Birds
5. Shorebirds, Gulls, Terns and Allied Species
6. Raptors
7. Other Migratory Birds
8. Game Mammals
9. Marine Mammals
10. Other Resident Wildlife

11. Fisheries Resources

12. Wildlife Propagation and Stocking

13. Surplus Animal Disposal

14. Scientific Collections

15. Animal Control

- Monomoy NWR submitted a depredation permit request for limited lethal control of HERG's, GBBG's, GHO's, BCNH's, and coyote in 1998 to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife in conjunction with an annual report of take under the refuge's 1997 permit.

16. Marking and Banding

- Monomoy NWR requested a color-marking permit (for HERG and GBBG) for the 1998 season from the Bird Banding Lab.

17. Disease Prevention and Control

H. Public Use

1. General

- ORP Donaldson oriented 13 visitors who came into the Visitor Center this month.
- Three meetings were held in the refuge auditorium this month. Organizations included the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, EPA, and New England Interstate Group.
- Annual Special Use Permit renewal notices were sent out by Monomoy staff to Stage Island Lot users.

2. Outdoor Classrooms - Students

3. Outdoor Classrooms - Teachers

- Five hundred National Wildlife Federation Teacher Kits were received. The kits are being distributed throughout the year. A total of 150 kits have been mailed out from early December 97 to the end of January 98. One hundred of the kits are being distributed from Monomoy NWR.
- Refuge staff met with representatives from the Friends of Monomoy and the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History several times to work out details of advertising and

conducting the upcoming seabird education workshop (challenge grant awarded to Friends of Monomoy).

4. Interpretive Foot Trails

5. Interpretive Tour Routes

6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations

- Bird banding information was gathered and collated by ORP Donaldson with the help of ROS Ware to be presented to the Girl Scouts. Due to bad weather, the program will be held in February.
- The bird feeding display in the Visitor Center has been modified, as the feeder has been removed and will not be re-installed.
- On January 7, Project Leader Oliveira and Refuge Operations Specialist Ware met with John Leaning and Robin Lord of the Cape Cod Times to discuss Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge issues.
- On January 7, Project Leader Oliveira and Refuge Operations Specialist Ware met with Dan Morast, Barbara Birdsey, Pat Lambert, and Amanda Pomeroy in Orleans to discuss the draft 1998 management plan for Monomoy NWR and the fact sheets which were prepared for distribution to the public regarding the Monomoy project.

7. Other Interpretive Programs

- The First Quarter Meadows Messenger was mailed on January 16 to our mailing list of 2,400 families. Staff and volunteers collaborated on the production of this issue.
- The Art Show co-sponsored by SuAsCo Watershed Association is in the planning stage. A new venue has been found - Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concord, MA - and Artists interested in participating are contacting the refuge. Interest announcements were placed in the New England Artists Quarterly and the Meadows Messenger.

8. Hunting

9. Fishing

10. Trapping

11. Wildlife Observation

12. Other Wildlife Oriented Recreation

13. Camping

14. Picnicking

15. Off-Road Vehicling

16. Other Non-Wildlife Oriented Recreation

17. Law Enforcement

18. Cooperating Associations/Friends Groups

- The SuAsCo Great Meadows Education Fund annual sales taxes were filed Jan 16.
- On January 21 Deputy RM Kennedy attended a meeting of Friends Groups from around New England at Sachuest Point NWR. Friends from Ninigret NWR, Lake Umbagog NWR, Mashpee NWR, Oxbow NWR, and the National Wildlife Refuge Association also attended.

19. Concessions

#### I. Equipment and Facilities

1. New Construction

2. Rehabilitation

- On January 9, Project Leader Oliveira and Engineer Kurt Otting traveled to the State Historic Preservation Office in Concord, New Hampshire to review the files for the structures at John Hay National Wildlife Refuge. This was done in preparation for an upcoming meeting to set priorities for the \$1,000,000 in construction rehabilitation funds for the restoration of the historic structures at the refuge.
- Project Leader Oliveira, together with Regional Archeologists John Wilson and Shellie Hight, and Engineer Kurt Otting met with representatives of the John Hay Commission, the Friends of John Hay, and the State of New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Office to begin the process of identifying the needs for construction rehabilitation at John Hay National Wildlife Refuge. The highest priority is to contract with an historic architectural and engineering firm to prepare a current conditions report complete with cost estimates for the work needed to be done on the facilities. The most important item identified to date is asbestos abatement.
- Winter cleaning throughout the refuge headquarters building is ongoing. Outdated files, equipment, and debris is being removed reclaim space taken up by unneeded materials. Rice's Barn and the shop at the Concord Division have also undergone a thorough, much



needed, cleaning.

### 3. Major Maintenance

- Monomoy's sea ox received a new engine, and work on replacing the console of the refuge's whaler was begun.

### 4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement

### 5. Communication Systems

- Deputy RM Kennedy solicited bids from several companies for replacement and upgrade of the telephone system at Great Meadows.
- At Monomoy NWR, two phone lines, including one for the fax machine, were transferred over to the new office (the weather station building).

### 6. Energy Conservation

### 7. Other

- On January 22, Project Leader Oliveira and Regional MMS Coordinator Teri Neyhart inspected the buildings and facilities at the Sudbury Annex. Asbestos was found in several of the buildings, and razor wire was noted within the boundary. A verbal request was forwarded to the Army requesting removal prior to transferring the lands to the Service.
- Monomoy staff and volunteers renovated the headquarters kitchen; improvements that will be much appreciated by summer interns. Staff and volunteers also completed moving desks, computers, file cabinets, etc. into the new office.
- The main headquarters building, the maintenance shop, and the Concord maintenance shop were all put on a master lock system by "Best Locks". This reduced everyone's key chains from approximately 20-25 keys to just a couple, which is far more practical. A key check-out system was implemented which will tighten security immensely.

## J. Other Items

### 1. Cooperative Programs

- Maint. Mech. Sears assisted Parker River NWR by transporting a piece of heavy equipment from Parker River to Missisquoi NWR. Neither station has a staffperson with a commercial drivers licence.

### 2. Items of Interest

### 3. Credits

#### K. Feedback